

# Employment First Arizona

EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO A CAREER

## What is Employment First ?

Employment First means that employment in the general workforce should be the first and preferred options for working age individuals with disabilities, regardless of level of disability, receiving assistance from publicly funded systems. Employment First refers to state and local systems change initiatives resulting in increased employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

## Why is it important?

- Only 22% of people in the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) system are in integrated employment.
- Only 14% of DDD funding spent on day and employment services went to integrated employment.
- In 2018, 251,181 people with disabilities were not in the labor force, and not seeking work.

## Benefits of Employment First

### For People with Disabilities

**Regular Jobs:** All working age citizens, regardless of disability, can work in the community and receive supports.

**Interaction:** Working side-by-side with co-workers in a diverse and integrated workplace.

**Money:** Earn minimum wage with opportunities for advancement.

**Self-Worth and Dignity:** Employment First practices support the self-worth and dignity of all people through competitive integrated employment.

### For Employers and Communities

**Talent Pipeline:** Employees with disabilities contribute to a skilled and diverse workplace.

**Eligibility for Tax Credits:** The Work Opportunity Tax Credit can reduce employer tax liability by as much as \$2400-\$9600 per hire for qualified employees.

**Satisfaction:** Research shows that people with disabilities have high employee retention rates.

**Tax Base:** Increase tax base as more people go to work, resulting in reduced reliance on public benefits.

**Contributions:** Vibrant communities as more individuals are working and contributing employee retention rates.

## Employment First Arizona Partners

- Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Arizona Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Chapter
- Arizona Department of Education
- Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Institute for Human Development at Northern Arizona University
- Sonoran University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)
- Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program

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## Economic Impact for all Arizonans

- An increase of between \$281.04 million and \$818.82 million in gross domestic product each year. Over a 10-year period, this would result in up to \$8.19 billion added to Arizona's economy.
- Between 703 and 2,042 new jobs created each year in the state. Over a 10-year period, this would result in up to 20,420 new jobs in Arizona.
- In the short term, the state could expect the money it collects in taxes to increase by \$14.25 to \$41.53 million each year.

Figures above were based on increasing Arizona's labor force participation rate for people with disabilities by 6% points, from 42.3% to 48.6%, over a 10-year period.

## What Needs to Happen Now

### Consider

Using the Colorado model for creating an Employment First Office

### Consider

Using the Wisconsin model for data collection and reporting

### Include

Data collection, benchmarks, and reporting of employment outcomes

### Include

Training and professional development for all employment personnel

### Be

Clear on definitions of employment.

### Keep

It simple and use plain language.

### Include

Language that says, "This is the employment policy of Arizona."

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## Want More Information?

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